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Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 07964

EXDIS

USEEC

PASS AMBASSADOR GERARD SMITH

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: ENRG, US, EEC
SUBJECT: U.S.-EURATOM RENEGOTIATION

REF: BRUSSELS 7937
1. COMMISSIONER BRUNNER CALLED ME TO THE COMMISSION LATE APRIL 24 FOR A POST MORTEM ON HIS MEETING WITH THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR AND JACQUEMOT, AND THE SUBSEQUENT LUNCH AT WHICH I WAS PRESENT (SEE REFTEL).
2. BRUNNER SAID THAT JACQUEMOT'S POSITION AND REACTIONS HAD BEEN VERY SIMILAR AT THE TWO MEETINGS, EXCEPT THAT (1) REQUEST FOR REAFFIRMATION OF U.S. LEGAL POSITION HAD NOT BEEN MADE IN MORNING DISCUSSION AND THAT (2) HE, BRUNNER, THOUGHT THAT JACQUEMOT AND AMBASSADOR NANTEUIL HAD SHOWN SOME INTEREST IN MY SUGGESTION THAT WAY OUT MIGHT BE AN UNDERSTANDING THAT NEGOTIATIONS BEGIN WITH LESS CONTROVERSIAL QUESTIONS, RESERVING MORE SENSITIVE ISSUES UNTIL POST-INFCE PERIOD. FRANKLY, I DID NOT DISCERN MUCH INTEREST, BUT PERHAPS BRUNNER SPOTTED SOMETHING I MISSED. ON LEGAL POINT, BRUNNER SAYS WE
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SHOULD ANSWER PROMPTLY OR OTHERWISE FRENCH WILL ARGUE IN COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS THAT THEY NEED NEW STATEMENT OF AMERICAN VIEWS BEFORE PROCEEDING FURTHER.

3. JACQUEMOT HAD TOLD BRUNNER BEFORE LUNCH THAT OBJECT OF GAME WAS TO GET PRESIDENT CARTER TO CHANGE HIS POSITION. BRUNNER HAD ALSO THOUGHT THAT FRENCH JUST

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WANTED TO LEAVE MATTERS WITH THIS ORAL REPLY, BUT THEY HAD AGREED THAT FRENCH POSITION SHOULD BE RESTATED IN COREPER. THEY WERE RESISTING IDEA, HOWEVER, THAT MATTER SHOULD AGAIN COME BEFORE FOREIGN MINISTERS ON MAY 2. BRUNNER ALSO SAYS THAT IN MORNING CONVERSATION HE HAD POINTED OUT THAT FRENCH POSITION COULD COMPLICATE PERSONAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GISCARD, PRESIDENT CARTER, AND EUROPEAN HEADS OF GOVERNMENT (READ SCHMIDT AND CALLAGHAN) IN PERIOD LEADING UP TO BONN SUMMIT. AMBASSADOR NANTEUIL HAD REPLIED THAT GISCARD WAS "FULLY AWARE" OF HIS GOVERNMENT'S POSITION, IMPLYING THAT BRUNNER'S CONCERNS HAD ALREADY BEEN TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT. HOWEVER, BRUNNER THOUGHT THAT JACQUEMOT WAS A LITTLE SHAKY ON THE HIGH-LEVEL POLITICAL IMPLICATIONS OF AN IMPASSE. BRUNNER INTERPRETED JACQUEMOT'S STATEMENT THAT THE FRENCH POSITION WAS MORE RIGID THAN BEFORE AS EVIDENCE THAT THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT HAD RECONSIDERED ITS POSITION AFTER FOREIGN MINISTER DE GUIRINGAUD HAD INDICATED TO GENSCHER AND OTHERS AT COPENHAGEN THAT MATTERS WOULD SHORTLY BE WORKED OUT.

4. BRUNNER SAID THERE WERE TWO HYPOTHESES ONE COULD HAVE ABOUT WHAT THE FRENCH ARE UP TO: OPTIMISTICALLY, JACQUEMOT'S EFFORTS WOULD PROVE TO BE ONE LAST TESTING OF THE SITUATION BEFORE THE FRENCH COMPROMISED. PESSIMISTICALLY--AND HE WAS MORE OF THIS VIEW THAN THE FORMER--THE FRENCH HAVE DECIDED TO PLAY FOR BIG GAME. IN SUPPORT OF CONFIDENTIAL

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THE LATTER THEORY HE SAID THAT THE FRENCH HAVE RECENTLY OFFERED THE GERMANS HIGHLY ENRICHED URANIUM (OVER 100 KILOS FROM WEAPONS STOCK) AT THREE TIMES THE AMERICAN PRICE, AND HAVE ALSO BEEN BUSY SEEKING CONTRACTS ON MORE REASONABLE TERMS FOR REPROCESSING PLUTONIUM IN FRANCE. THE BIG GAME WOULD BE TO PLAY THE HAND SO AS TO DEMONSTRATE AMERICAN UNRELIABILITY AS A NUCLEAR SUPPLIER AND TO ESTABLISH FRENCH RELIABILITY.

5. BRUNNER SAID THAT IN HIS VIEW THE SITUATION WAS NOW SERIOUS. HE SUGGESTED THAT HE MIGHT TRY TO HAVE SCHMIDT CALL GISCARD. HE SAID HE WOULD DISCUSS THE SITUATION WITH GENSCHER TOMORROW, AND HE SUGGESTED THAT AMBASSADOR STOESSEL SHOULD SEEK AN EARLY OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THE MATTER WITH GENSCHER.

6. IN THIS POST MORTEM I LARGELY LISTENED, EXCEPT TO COMMENT THAT IT SEEMED TO ME AS IF JACQUEMOT MIGHT HAVE A PERSONAL STAKE IN SEEING TO IT THAT HIS INTERPRETATION OF THE INFCE COMMUNIQUE COMMITMENT WAS MAINTAINED AS THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT'S INTERPRETATION. HINTON

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